

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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R 161930Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7179

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 0857

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID BB

SUBJ: GOB REQUESTS USG ASSISTANCE FOR REGIONAL OPHTHALMIC TRAINING

FOR AID

1. GOB HAS REQUESTED USG/AID ASSISTANCE AMOUNTING TO APPROXIMATELY US \$40,000 TO SET UP REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM IN BARBADOS FOR OPHTHALMIC ASSISTANTS AND PARA-MEDICAL PERSONNEL. OBJECTIVE OF PROGRAM WOULD BE TO TRAIN THIRTY NURSES (10 FROM BARBADOS, 20 FROM LESS DEVELOPED TERRITORIES) IN PREVENTIVE AND CLINICAL TREATMENT TECHNIQUES, INCLUDING SCREENING FOR GLAUCOMA AND OTHER DISORDERS. GOB CLAIMS PROGRAM HAS SUPPORT OF MOST OF WINDWARD/LEEWARD ISLANDS' GOVERNMENTS, WHICH ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE NURSING PERSONNEL TO ATTEND. GOB UNDERSTANDS FROM INTERNATIONAL EYE FOUNDATION (IEF), SIBLEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016 (MS. KATHERINE A. BURKHARD) THAT SOME AID FUNDING MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR PARAMEDICAL ACTIVITIES ON THIS TYPE. AID ASSISTANCE WOULD PROVIDE CONTRACTING SERVICES

THROUGH IEF FOR TWO QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS, EQUIPMENT AND FOR EXPENSES OF NON-BARBADIAN TRAINEES. GOB WOULD PROVIDE PHYSICAL FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, LOCAL PERSONNEL AND WOULD FUND COSTS OF ITS ATTENDEES.

2. GOB FORMAL REQUEST WAS PASSED TO EMBASSY AS DIPLOMATIC

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NOTE DATED MAY 6, 1974. GOB FINANCE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

AND HEALTH MINISTRIES ALSO APPROACHED EMBOFF PRIOR TO THAT TIME TO DESCRIBE PLAN AND EMPHASIZE ITS IMPORTANCE TO REGIONAL EYE CARE AND PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS. GOB NOTED THAT MOST OF LESS DEVELOPED ISLANDS HAD NO FULL-TIME OPHTHALMOLOGIST AND THAT TRAINING OF OPHTHALMIC ASSISTANTS WAS CITED AS "URGENT NEED" BY FIRST CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE FOR BLIND IN 1970.

3. MS. A.M.S. CONNELL, M.B., D.O., C.B., F.R.C.S. (FELLOW AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS (OPHTHALMOLOGY), SENIOR CONSULTANT OPHTHALMIC SURGEON AT QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL AND INTERNATIONALLY PROMINENT EYE SURGEON WOULD OVERSEE PROGRAM. MISS CONNELL HAS BEEN INTERESTED IN PROJECT FROM BEGINNING, AND WHATEVER SHE HANDLES IS HANDLED WELL. SHE CAME HERE FROM

THE U.K. SEVERAL YEARS AGO TO TEACH BARBADOS' SMALL CADRE OF EYE DOCTORS AND ONE OF THE BEST THINGS THAT EVER HAPPENED TO BARBADOS. VARIOUS CIVIC GROUPS, ESPECIALLY THE LIONS WHO HAVE A SPECIAL INTEREST IN HELPING THE BLIND, HAVE INDICATED AN INTEREST IN ASSISTING THIS PROJECT, POSSIBLY BY DEFRAISING SOME OF BOARDING COSTS FROM TRAINEES FROM OTHER ISLANDS.

4. COMMENT: PROGRAM OBVIOUSLY HAS HIGH LEVEL INTEREST WITHIN GOOGM THIS STRIKES US AS PRECISELY TYPE OF REGIONAL SELF-HELP EFFORT THAT WE SHOULD SUPPORT. GOB INITIATIVE IN PUSHING

PROJECT AND LINING UP PARTICIPATION OF OTHER ISLANDS IS JUST TYPE OF LEADERSHIP EFFORT WE NEED TO FOSTER REGIONAL SPIRIT OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT. THIS EFFORT, POSSIBLY MOST AMBITIOUS RECENT EFFORT TO HELP ERADICATE BLINDNESS AND EYE DISEASES, SHOULD GO LONG WAY TOWARDS MEETING OUR INTERESTS ON IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE OF GENERAL POPULACE. TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED, IS, IN OUR ESTIMATION, VERY SMALL IN COMPARISON WITH TANGIBLE

BENEFITS PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES WOULD GAIN FROM PROGRAM, AND, IT APPEARS THAT USAID SUPPORT OF THIS PROGRAM WOULD BE

FULLY CONSISTENT WITH OUR POLICY OF CHANNELLING ASSISTANCE THROUGH REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS. WE STRONGLY URGE DEPT TO MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO ASSIST THIS LAUDABLE EFFORTS.

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